

# NORTHERN CALIFORNIA NEWS

By Charles E. Dougherty, Jr. CTT Deputy Director

The winter meet at Golden Gate Fields is coming to a close on Super Bowl Sunday February 3. The new Tapeta racing surface has been embraced by the grand majority of trainers.

A rash of injuries was sustained during December; however, trainers are still in favor of the new surface v the old dirt track at Golden Gate. All of the problems seemed to be traced to a learning curve of track maintenance. It seems as if some new harrows and a new track renovation program seemed to have cured the ills.

The Tapeta surface has withstood a pounding of storms throughout the month of January. There have been no interruptions of either training or racing during the inclement weather. This is a significant change in that, in the past, we had to endure many a day with a sealed

track during the winter months. This is no longer the case as this new Tapeta surface seems to be able to handle any amount of rain. The most impressive stat of the meet shows that the number of starters per race is approximately 8.5. That compares with last year's meet of 7.3 per race. Now, that is very promising!

Will it be the last racing season at Bay Meadows? That is the lingering question in the barn area these days. There is growing speculation that Bay Meadows may ask for race dates in 2009. Of course, the CHRBMandate regarding



synthetic surfaces must still be addressed before Bay Meadows could possibly be awarded dates beyond the 2008 season. Thus far, only those in the inner circle of Bay Meadows management know for sure what they will do. ■